FBIS

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Gulf Conflict

Iraq launched a "successful air strike" against two "maritime targets" south of Khark Island, according to an Iraqi military communique broadcast by Baghdad radio. The Manama paper *GULF DAILY NEWS* confirmed that the Liberian tanker *Saint Tobias* was struck during an Iraqi air attack, but did not mention a second vessel. No monitored Iranian sources have been observed to report any recent attacks in the Gulf area.

Iran

President 'Ali Khamene'i returned with his delegation from a trip to Syria, Libya, and Algeria, Tehran radio reported. Khamene'i met with Majlis speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to inform him of the details of his trip, the radio added. Khamene'i also met with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni, IRNA noted. After returning with the delegation, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati received his Pakistani counterpart Sahabzada Yaqub Ali Khan, Tehran radio reported. In a separate meeting, the industries minister received his visiting Syrian counterpart to discuss industrial cooperation, IRNA noted.

Syria

Defense Minister Mustafa Talas stated in an interview published by *DER SPIEGEL* on 10 September that Vice President Rifa't al-Asad is "persona non grata forever" in Syria, and that if the vice president had not gone abroad, the "Army would have struck." Talas also disclosed that the Soviet Union has agreed to provide Syria with nuclear weapons if Israel uses such weapons. "We would even risk our lives to gain possession" of nuclear weapons that could reach Israel, he added. Meanwhile, Vice President al-Asad has returned to Geneva after a brief visit to Paris, according to reliable sources cited by AFP. An official spokesman for Al-Asad cited by Radio Monte Carlo noted that he is in Geneva for "health reasons" and that he will return to Syria "very soon." The spokesman added that in a contact with Al-Asad, Talas denounced the "forged facts" presented by *DER SPIEGEL*.

Afghanistan

President Babrak Karmal and Prime Minister Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand held separate meetings with USSR Deputy Premier Ziya Nuriyev, who is participating in a joint commission for economic cooperation, Kabul radio reported.

Israel

The Central Committee of the ruling Herut party voted to approve the proposed national unity government and outgoing Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir's list of ministerial portfolios, Jerusalem radio reported. In a related development, the National Religious Party Directorate endorsed the party's participation in the national unity government, ITIM noted. The Knesset will convene on 13 September to discuss the establishment of the new government, Jerusalem radio disclosed.

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Chad

Libya and France have decided to begin at the "earliest possible time" the "comprehensive and simultaneous withdrawal" of the French Armed Forces and the "Libyan elements" supporting the Transitional National Union Government (GUNT), according to a statement issued in Tripoli and Paris cited by JANA. The withdrawal will begin on 25 September, the statement added. Cheysson's Libyan counterpart.

Reacting to the agreement during a stopover in Paris, Chadian Foreign Minister Lassou Gouara stated in remarks broadcast by Paris radio that Chad was "not involved in the discussions" that led to the agreement, and that its first reaction was one of "surprise." Gouara added that he does not trust Libya and requests "guarantees" that Libyan forces will not return.

A Ndjamena radio commentary emphasized that a Libyan troop withdrawal cannot be "warmly welcomed" by Chad if the decision is not "effectively implemented." Chadians "nurse some doubt" and maintain a "judicious reserve" because Libya's "false pullouts" are an "open secret" and the "contradictory and startling" statements by Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi on invading Chad are still remembered.

Meanwhile, a GUNT communique broadcast by the clandestine Bardai Chadian National Radio stated that GUNT had been "continually informed" about the Libyan-French discussions regarding the withdrawal of "Libyan elements" and French and Zairian troops. GUNT is "happy" with the agreement, the communique added, because the withdrawal of "French imperialist troops" and "Libyan technicians living in Chad" will allow an "African solution" to the Chadian problem.

Israel

Seven people, including two Arab inhabitants of the "territories," were wounded by shots fired at the Jerusalem-Hebron bus near Bethlehem, Jerusalem television reported. The IDF subsequently imposed a curfew on Al-Khidr village and Al-Duhayshah refugee camp, Jerusalem radio added. Meanwhile, security forces and demonstrators clashed during several "disturbances" near refugee camps in the territories as Palestinians marked the anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacre, the radio noted.

In a separate development, Israeli security forces last month arrested several dozen people belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem radio disclosed. The group is suspected of organizing attacks on Jews and local Arabs, the radio added.

Lebanon

The Cabinet ministers have agreed to refrain from making statements that could harm national unity or cause concern among the people, Prime Minister Rashid Karami disclosed in remarks broadcast by Voice of Lebanon radio after the conclusion of the first day of the ministerial "conclave" in Bikfayya. The radio described the agreement as an "honor pact" by which ministers will refrain from "intransigence or outbiddings." Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Junblatt welcomed the new "code of ethics" in remarks broadcast by the clandestine Voice of the Mountain radio, but he added that it must be implemented "on all levels" and that it will not cancel "our role as an opposition." Junblatt and Amal movement leader Nabih Birri subsequently discussed the results of the conclave with Syrian Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam in Damascus, Beirut Radio noted.

Meanwhile, new Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin inspected IDF units in southern Lebanon, according to IDF radio.

French-Jordanian Relations

France is ready to meet all possible Jordanian military needs, French Defense Minister Hernu stated at an Amman press conference reported by the daily *SAWT AL-SHA'B*. Noting that France has missiles similar to the U.S. Stinger, Hernu said that if the Jordanians ask for such weapons, France will not hesitate to supply them.

Inter-Arab Affairs

PDRY-Syria — Before holding lengthy talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus, visiting PDRY leader 'Ali Nasir Muhammad stressed that his country will continue to support both Syria and the PLO, Damascus radio reported. He also warned that the "imperialist" military presence in the Red Sea is designed to restore "imperialist hegemony over the Arab region and peddle liquidatory and capitulatory designs."

PLO-Libya — PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has sent Libya's Col al-Qadhdhafi a "very important" message on the Palestine issue and the Arab situation, KUNA disclosed.

Afghan-Iranian Border Clash

DRA border guards "crushed" Iranian border troops which penetrated 25 km inside Afghan territory on 10 September, BAKHTAR reported, citing a Kabul security source. Two Iranians were captured in the Nimruz Province clash.

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MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

20 SEPTEMBER 1984

Lebanon

U.S. Embassy Explosion — A booby-trapped vehicle exploded near the U.S. Embassy building in 'Awkar, killing at least 40 people and wounding many others, Beirut radio announced on 20 September. Both the U.S. and British ambassadors were injured in the blast, which set the building on fire. The Islamic Jihad Organization claimed responsibility for the bombing in a telephone call to AFP's Beirut office, asserting that the attack proves the organization's determination to rid Lebanon of all Americans.

Political Developments — Government ministers attending the conclave sessions in Bikfayya approved "most" of the names for the 40-member committee on constitutional reform, and the remaining names will be chosen on 20 September, Prime Minister Rashid Karami revealed in remarks reported by the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon. Although the ministers have agreed on the sectarian makeup of the consultative body, there were "radical differences" among them regarding some of the proposed names, according to the radio.

Gulf Conflict

Iraqi forces struck a "warning blow" against the Khark Island "installations" on 20 September, Baghdad Voice of the Masses radio announced citing an Iraqi military spokesman. This attack was in reply to Iran's strikes against Iraqi port installations on 16 September, the spokesman added.

Egypt

Red Sea Mining — Defense Minister 'Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazalah stated that attempts are underway to recover the mine recently discovered by British minehunters in the Red Sea, MENA reported. He expressed his belief that the mine is a "modern" one and that it is "very sophisticated." Abu Ghazalah disclosed that "we have considerable suspicions" about Libyan involvement in the mining but "we are not certain." He also confirmed that Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi sent a message to Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni congratulating him and expressing satisfaction for the job accomplished in the Red Sea.

An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman cited by Tehran radio denied Abu Ghazalah's remarks, claiming that the mining was a "plot" planned by the United States, Israel, Egypt, and their allies in order to force upon Muslim nations the presence of the armed forces of "arrogant" countries. The "empty claim" by Abu Ghazalah that Libyan leader Col al-Qadhdhafi congratulated Iranian President 'Ali Khamene'i is nothing but Egyptian "false propaganda" planned by the "Zionists," the spokesman noted. There was no mention of such a message addressed to Khomeyni.

Saudi Ship Damaged — AFP reported that a Saudi ship was hit by an explosion south of Suez. The cause is unknown.

Libya

There are both concrete and moral guarantees that Libya will withdraw from Chad, Col al-Qadhdhafi declared in an 18 September interview with Paris television. The concrete guarantees will take the form of observers on both sides to monitor the withdrawal, while the moral aspect is based on Libya's friendship with France and its eagerness to adhere to its commitments. Expressing the hope that France and Libya's withdrawal from Chad will open a new era in bilateral relations, Al-Qadhdhafi confirmed his desire for a summit meeting with French President Francois Mitterrand, either in Libya or in France.

Saudi Arabia

The security forces have recently confronted behavior which violates the "fundamentals of security" by some pilgrims, and officials have done all they could to comfort Iranian pilgrims during their stay in Mecca and Medina, SPA noted citing a statement by an Interior Ministry "responsible source." The government deeply regrets that Iranian information media continue to respond to Saudi efforts with "abuse through misleading campaigns and various news reports," such as Tehran radio's "distortion" with "no basis in truth" of the recent clash between Iranian and Iraqi pilgrims in Mecca. An investigation into the incident concluded that the Iranians were responsible for starting the fight, the statement noted.

GCC Meeting

During their meeting in Abha, Saudi Arabia, the GCC defense and foreign ministers approved the defense policy paper as the document that will determine the "course and philosophy" of their future defense policies, according to a statement issued at the end of the meeting and carried by SPA. The ministers expressed satisfaction with the paper's policy of self-reliance and with the development of military coordination among the GCC states.

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